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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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No USSR - Nuclear test talks: Khrushchev has charged in his talks with the British that control mechanisms proposed for a nuclear test-cessation agreement are designed to locate Soviet missile bases, and said that he was "having no part of it." The Macmillan-Khrushchev talks have convinced British officials that Moscow will not compromise on its insistence on veto powers in the proposed control commission, except possibly as part of a "package deal" at a heads-of-government conference. In Moscow Khrushchev continued his offensive manner toward Macmillan, injecting such subjects as Suez into the talks. Not only Khrushchev, but Mikoyan and Gromyko failed to accompany Macmillan as planned on his Kiev-Leningrad trip, sending First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov instead.)

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Iraq: An attempt to assassinate Prime Minister Qasim was made on 22 February, according to an Iraqi official. He said 15 arrests ensued, but he did not identify the group behind the attempt. Whether or not the report is true, such rumors support the Iraqi Communist effort to keep Qasim in a state of suspicion and fear for his personal security, and encourage him to deal drastically with opposition elements.

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Iran: [Labor unrest at the Iranian Abadan oil refinery may soon result in a strike. The Iranian Government has suggested that the consortium of Western oil companies operating Iran's oil industry grant an immediate across-the-board ten-percent wage increase to calm the situation. The Iranian Communist underground, encouraged by Moscow's attacks on the Shah, would seek to expand disorders resulting from any strike.]

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Morocco: (The Moroccan Government may press for an agreement concerning the five American air bases in Morocco in the "not too distant future." The secretary general of the Moroccan Foreign Ministry assured an American Embassy officer that the Ibrahim government would approach the problem with a friendly spirit. However, the Istiqlal right wing, which seeks to unseat Ibrahim, is attacking the government for failure to act swiftly, hinting this may be attributable to the recent offer of \$40,000,000 of American aid. The Ibrahim government probably will seek the evacuation of the bases within several years. Ibrahim's predecessor, Balafrej, not only asked a phased evacuation but proposed a prohibition of "strategic" use of the bases in the interim.]

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III. THE WEST

410 *France-NATO: [NATO Secretary General Spaak has been informed that the French Government decided on 27 February to withdraw the French Mediterranean fleet from its "present NATO status," effective 2 March. The French fleet, like all other NATO Mediterranean fleets, is under national command in peace time and is earmarked for NATO wartime service under the Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Mediterranean (CINCAFMED), a British admiral. De Gaulle personally disapproved a less drastic rearrangement within the existing NATO command structure which had apparently been proposed by other high French officials. He and Premier Debré may hope by this move to obtain the Allied backing for French policy in North Africa which they claim is essential if NATO is to protect vital French national interests.]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

General Strike at Iranian Refinery Likely

A decline in the production of the Iranian Abadan oil refinery has aggravated the chronic problem of surplus labor, and resulting labor unrest may soon erupt into widespread strikes and violence.

The Abadan refinery, run by the consortium of Western oil companies operating Iran's "nationalized" oil industry, has a capacity of about 514,000 barrels daily but recently has produced only 275,000 barrels daily. {While the refinery labor force has been reduced by about 7,000 from the 1956 peak of 35,000, it still includes over 17,000 surplus workers who would have been fired except for the companies' fear of violence and the government's threats to side with the workers.}

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There is also substantial unemployment in Abadan, and the large Arab population in the area--about 30 percent--probably could be exploited by Iraq. The Iranian Communist underground, encouraged by Moscow's attacks on the Shah, would seek to expand disorders resulting from any strike.

Thus far the government has shown little interest in improving social and economic conditions but is using the deteriorating situation to force the consortium to increase refinery output. More recently, the Iranian labor minister asked the company to grant an immediate 10-percent across-the-board wage increase to calm the situation. The minister threatened to apply the terms of the minimum wage law, which is expected to be passed soon, to increase oil workers' wages about 30 percent if the company refused.

Government forces probably could contain any strike in the Abadan area, although there is always the danger that anti-regime sentiment, based on real grievances, could get out of hand and that the strike fever could spread to other parts of the country.

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